

**South Carolina Public Library**

# **Standards**

## **1998**

## **South Carolina Public Library Standards Committee**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	-----
SUMMARY OF STANDARDS	-----
SECTION 1. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND FUNDING	-----
SECTION 2. HUMAN RESOURCES	-----
SECTION 3. ACCESS	-----
SECTION 4. MATERIALS AND COLLECTIONS	-----
SECTION 5. SERVICES	-----
SECTION 6. FACILITIES	-----
SECTION 7. COOPERATION AND RESOURCE SHARING	-----
SECTION 8. COMMUNITY RELATIONS	-----
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A: PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD BYLAWS CHECKLIST	-----
APPENDIX B: PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD ORIENTATION CHECKLIST	-----
APPENDIX C: HUMAN RESOURCES (PERSONNEL) POLICIES CHECKLIST	-----
APPENDIX D: LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS WITH INTERPRETATIONS LIST AND FREEDOM TO READ & FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENTS	-----
APPENDIX E: LIBRARY STAFF ORIENTATION & TRAINING PROGRAM CHECKLIST	-----
APPENDIX F: LIBRARY MARKETING PLAN CHECKLIST	-----
APPENDIX G: LIBRARY IMAGE AUDIT CHECKLIST	-----
APPENDIX H: GLOSSARY OF LIBRARY TERMS	-----

# INTRODUCTION

**South Carolina Public Library Standards, 1998** were approved by the South Carolina State Library Board on May 20, 1998. These standards are the first public library standards developed under the auspices of the South Carolina State Library. Previous standards for South Carolina public libraries were developed by the Public Library Section of the South Carolina Library Association, and were subsequently adopted by the South Carolina State Library Board. This document replaces those standards last revised in 1986. Earlier editions were published in 1955, 1964, 1969, 1975, and 1981.

The new standards stress the importance of long-range planning and the evaluation of services in achieving excellence. They recognize the uniqueness of each library, which must determine and establish its own identity in the community. In establishing service levels, these standards provide options at the basic, full, and comprehensive levels.

## **South Carolina Public Library Standards, 1998:**

- Provide a tool to assess the quality and effectiveness of a library service program
- Help each library determine areas for improvement
- Reflect the importance of technology and personnel development
- Stress the need for greater cooperation and resource sharing
- Aid each library in taking an active public role to gain maximum community support
- Provide a basis for using statistics in local planning and evaluation

Steady progress was realized under previous standards documents. While compliance with these standards is completely voluntary, public libraries are encouraged to use them as part of their overall planning process to assess their performance and effectiveness. The use of this document in conjunction with other planning tools, such as **Planning For Results: A Public Library Transformation Process** (ALA, 1998), will enable library staff and library boards to determine community needs, develop programs and services to meet those needs, and interpret those needs to funding authorities.

# **SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**South Carolina Public Library Standards, 1998** were developed by a committee of public library staff members representing a cross section of South Carolina's public libraries. They identified concerns and issues which needed to be addressed by new standards, reviewed previous South Carolina standards and other state standards, and reviewed public library statistical data in the state, the Southeast, and the nation. **Standards for Florida Public Libraries: A Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** was chosen as the model. The work of the committee was reviewed by selected public library directors. The entire effort was coordinated by State Library staff members.

This document is divide into eight sections:

Governance, Leadership and Funding  
Human Resources  
Access  
Materials and Collections  
Services  
Facilities  
Cooperation and Resource Sharing  
Community Relations

Each section begins with an objective statement, which sets the tone for what is to be covered in the section. The standards include a checklist containing a number of indicators a library may use for self-assessment. There are the following five possible choices for each item:

<b>Yes.</b>	The library meets the standard.
<b>No.</b>	The library does not meet the standard.
<b>Planned.</b>	The library does not currently meet the standard, but has plans to meet it.
<b>Not Planned.</b>	The library does not currently meet the standard and does not view the standard as a high priority.
<b>N/A.</b>	The standard does not apply to the library.

In a number of cases, the library is asked to determine a level of service it wishes to achieve. These levels (Basic, Full, and Comprehensive) are intended as guidelines, not as measurements of good, better, or best. A library may choose basic in some areas and full or comprehensive in other areas. The basic level represents the minimum level of service required by law and/or which should be available to all citizens. The full level represents a median level of effort to meet a library's primary service goals. The comprehensive level represents the highest level of effort to meet a library's primary service goals, as well as an expanded program of services.